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**THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY**

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PAGES

FROM

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF A

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P R E F A C E.

To those who know the Author or who have read his works no apology is needed for opening up some pages in the life of one who *has changed his religion more than once*. An apologist for the Church should not be open to adverse criticism as regards his good faith; his intentions should be shown to be straightforward.

To the general public it is well that the thoughts and works which have determined a very Protestant mind to cling finally to Catholicism, in spite of the very obvious advantages he would have in returning to the Church of which he was a Minister, should be put on record for the benefit of those drawn towards the Church.

CHELTENHAM, *August*, 1879.



To place before the general reader the inner records of a mind is not a usual, or unless some peculiar reason warrants it, a desirable course of action. It lays a person open to the charge either of being a Pharisee or a misunderstood and aggrieved individual.

Such an argument does not, however, in my opinion, apply to the *general* outlines of religious thought through which one has passed, and passed in an age which, perhaps more than any gone before, is intent on solving, as far as man may solve, religious doubts and difficulties, and arriving at the naked truth, be that truth what it may, be the acceptance or the rejection of that truth most detrimental or otherwise to the recipient.

With these few words of explanation or apology I lay before my readers a few records of a life

which has up till quite a recent period been passed in a search for religious truth,—a search which has involved rejection of certain Creeds and loss of many friends, although such loss has been more than compensated by the knowledge that honest inquiry is the duty of man, and that, on the other hand, the *tacit acceptance* of what is believed to be false is not only soul-destroying but actually a brain-weakening and upsetting line of action.

My father, who for five-and-thirty years held a rectory in the Church of England and who now belongs to what is called the Ritualistic School, was originally a Quaker, as was his father before him. He was baptized when a young man by the well-known Baptist Noel; and my grandfather likewise joined the Church of England when more than fifty years old. My grandmother, Hannah Birkbeck, was also a Quakeress, and likewise joined the Church of England. Thus much it is necessary to say, for it will be obvious that it makes a considerable difference to the mental constitution whether a man's ancestors have for generation after generation belonged to a particular religious society or not: if the former,

then it is far harder to break with old associations; if the latter, one but feels that a step onwards throws no slur on the Creed which has harboured but one generation of a family; and the very fact of movement in such a case brings out the truth so well expressed by the great Christian poet, Browning :—

“ I say that man was made to grow, not stop ;
 That help, he needed once, and needs no more,
 Having grown but an inch by, is withdrawn :
 For he hath new needs, and new helps to these.
 This imports solely, man should mount on each
 New height in view ; the help whereby he mounts,
 The ladder-rung his foot has left, may fall,
 Since all things suffer change save God the Truth.
 Man apprehends Him newly at each stage
 Whereat earth's ladder drops, its service done ;
 And nothing shall prove twice what once was proved.”

(A Death in the Desert.)

There comes a period in the life of a young man when he no longer learns because he wishes to please his masters or tutors, when he no longer in church sits quiet and listens vaguely to the remarks of the preacher, but a sort of inspiration, a something from without, seems to enter in and become a part of him ; this something may and very often does completely change the character

of a youth, and leads him often to decide once and for all what shall be his line of life ; such a decision being before perhaps quite undecided.

The health of my parents necessitated my father being much away from his living, and his friend, Bishop Forbes, of Brechin, a well-known High Church Bishop of the Scotch Episcopal Church, begged him to take charge of the Episcopal Church at Stonehaven ; he did so, and thus Caledonia became my home for some years, a fact which I look upon for many reasons as little less than providential.

The Episcopal Church in Scotland is the Church of a small minority ; many of the descendants of the old Jacobite families belong to it, and several of the Scotch nobility ; it has a fair number of adherents of quite the humbler and poorer classes of the community ; it is also (or was, I had perhaps better say) High Church in its tendency, and the old Communion Office is reckoned now as it was then more "Romish" than that of the Church of England. It has hardly any of the lower-middle class adherents, and is surrounded by a very adverse element, namely, the Presbyterian.

It will strike the reader at once that a Scotch Episcopalian was therefore in a very similar position to what a Roman Catholic was forty years ago in England. The same small select body with a smattering of Peers, who in the one case were proud of their Jacobite antecedents and gloried in the troubles they had undergone for poor Prince Charlie, the same body of very poor persons, the same lack in one case as in the other of the middle class ; a very obvious absence, for in England as well as Scotland the lower-middle class is the home of all that is unromantic, ungenerous and Puritanical ; from the middle class comes the great love of self-gratification and detestation of those below them, with fawning adulation of their superiors and a would-be piousness in demeanour which render the typical Englishman an object of disgust to the whole Latin race in Europe.

It was while my father was at Stonehaven that I had as my tutor and master a Free Church Presbyterian minister, who has helped most materially to form the minds of a vast number of the present generation of educated Scotchmen of the upper classes,—I allude to the late Rev. Dr.

Tulloch, of Aberdeen. The Free Church may be narrow as a Church, but still if such men belong to it as my worthy preceptor, then all I can say is that it is well able to play its part as a living organization in the nineteenth century.

While at Aberdeen I was surrounded by High Church clergymen—many if not most of them Englishmen. There it was that the Rev. Frederic George Lee, now of All Saints, Lambeth, reared a noble edifice, dedicated to “St. Mary”—there laboured with him the Rev. George Akers, now Vice-Principal of St. Edmund’s Roman Catholic College, near Ware. He it was who enlisted me as a member of the A.P.U.C., that is to say, the Association for Promoting the Unity of Christendom.

While I thus imbibed High Churchism on Sunday, I drank in with even greater satisfaction during the six secular days the Broad Church philosophy of the worthy Dr. Tulloch. Had it not been for him I might at this moment be lingering in the miserable shilly-shallying position of an English Ritualist with my head in the Roman element and my feet in the black mud of Protestant Erastianism.

Dr. Lee, when he reared his church on the banks of the Dee, prophesied that it would be "the beginning of the end" of Protestantism in Aberdeen. He miscalculated Scottish feeling and Scottish common sense. Ritualism may "go down" with Englishmen, but the Scotchman does not like "go-betweens." In Religion, as in Politics, he is very decided. Dr. Lee found that he had to retrace his steps to England, and Protestantism in Aberdeen remained as firm as the granite of which the old city is built. Roman Catholicism had its fort in that northern bed of Presbyterianism, but when I was there, though Catholics were spoken of with respect, yet they were considered quite out of the running. Of recent years I know nothing of Aberdeen.

I was sufficiently long in Scotland to love the people, to make many friends, and to imbibe to a certain degree Scottish feelings. I suppose I may say that a residence in Scotland, when a young man is fortunate enough to be thrown amongst thoughtful persons, is as beneficial to him as a residence in Germany is to many Englishmen. My wanderings for some time after I left Scotland are, from the point of view with which these

reminiscences are written, immaterial. It was some years later, at Ramsgate, that I first found my religious difficulties come to an absolute crisis. While there I was fortunate enough to become acquainted with the Pugins ; with Edward Pugin, from that day till his death, I had a happy friendship, unbroken by a single stormy word on the part of one who was as impetuous as he was generous and kind. When poor Edward Pugin died, I felt that a firm friend and a true real man had passed away. None who really knew him failed to love him ; his impetuosity was by all generous people understood ; his genius was too great to cause such small sun-spots to be observed.

It was while at Ramsgate that the Gothic architecture—the romantic idea of “monks,” “Angelus bells” and the kind hospitality and friendliness of the Pugins—gradually led me to break with my old Scotch High Churchism, and to seek the short and brief instruction given me preparatory to being received into the Roman Catholic Church.

I do not think I ought to have been received. There was present too much of the poetic spirit,

too little of the essence of Catholicism. I never learnt or was required to learn any Catechism; my preparation was of the most sketchy character, and I may say that I was simply a youngish man with strong romantic feelings, whose High Church notions had never, thanks to Dr. Tulloch, taken deep root, and whose admiration for Rome's antiquity carried me away captive.

I never believed all Rome's teaching—what fitted in with my moral and mental wants I assimilated; the rest never was rejected, because never considered.

I suffered a good deal materially from my change of faith—where kindness and sympathy might have been looked for, I found the contrary; where, on the other hand, I received friendship, there I had little cause to expect it.

With many ups and downs life gradually slipped away till the year 1869-70, when the natural bent of my mind towards theology led me to put myself into communication with Archbishop Manning, who most kindly saw me received at St. Edmund's College, in order to prepare for the priesthood. The life there was very pleasant, the priests sociable, the work

agreeable. There was a very good College library, to which no difficulty of entrance was ever felt by me, and I believe the "philosophers," at all events, if not the juniors, had the free run of it. Here again I remember I was a "rebel" to one custom, if not more. There was a relic, supposed or real, of St. Edmund, and at certain times one did reverence to the place where it was kept. This I remember I frequently did not do, because I thought all relics were a delusion. Had I learnt my faith better, I might have considered that, whether present or not, the intention to do honour to a saint was a laudable proceeding.

I now enjoyed immensely the smattering of philosophy which I daily picked up; but, as ill-luck would have it, the Catholic papers, the Catholic reviews, and the whole air was full of the Vatican Council and the question of Papal Infallibility. The students naturally talked about it, read about it, thought about it—as did the priests, and every one more or less.

At once my instincts, if I may so say, placed me on the anti-infallibility side. The shade of old Dr. Tulloch perhaps haunted me. Anyway, I thought the infallibilists were "bullies" and

“tyrants,” and the other side were for “freedom.” I always detested “rule” and “subjection”—it was inherent in me. Quakerism in the blood and Presbyterianism in my tuition may have accounted for it partially. I took a keen interest in all the points raised, and the prime object of becoming a priest I fear became subservient in my mind to the vivid and present question of Infallibility.

St. Edmund’s was to me, and I should think to the other residents, a very happy home. In those days the seniors were there preparing for orders, while there were a number of lads who were not going in for ecclesiasticism; now, I believe the theological students are all removed, and it is simply a college for lay boys. At that time it was the main source of a supply of young priests for the dioceses of Westminster and Southwark.

Through never having been possessed of the true idea of Catholicism (of which I will say something later on), I was utterly disconcerted by the controversy on Infallibility; and as certitude is, one need hardly say, an essential for the Priesthood, I found the settled course of events which pursued its way in the College

was incompatible with the controversial fire which burned in my breast.

I therefore left the College and embarked on the wide sea of doubt and hesitation. Well do I remember the morning when the telegrams related how the decree of Papal Infallibility had been passed at Rome. I was on the outside of a Bayswater 'bus, coming into town from Kensington. I literally shuddered, so thoroughly did I feel that the grand old idea of Rome the Eternal and the Pilot-boat for Christendom had collapsed. Many Protestants, although theoretical disbelievers in Rome, yet inherently feel, "Here is a grand solemn *mysterious* faith." They look at it as a sort of last resource when Protestantism shall finally have had its day. Such minds I believe in many cases felt the shock I speak of, —it was in their idea the overthrow of a great historic school of Christianity, an unshipping of the cable which had kept the old ship safe, and now she had broken away and would soon be dashed to pieces amid the rocks of Rationalism and Infidelity.

And now my readers must bear in mind a fact which is not always sufficiently remembered.

If I hold, say, eight doctrines and become a Roman Catholic, I add a few additional items of belief, but I do not require to give up my pre-existing faith. For a well-instructed Ritualist at the present day who wishes to become a Roman Catholic, all that is necessary is that he should add to his belief the knowledge that the Church of Rome is the Church of Christ, and the Pope its monarch and infallible head. A Protestant in what he believes positively will not have *to change* that belief but to *add to it*.

I had not embraced Catholicism properly, and had simply accepted certain additional doctrines to those I held before in Scotland. To return to the Church of England, though a momentous step in one sense of the word, was in another a very easy and simple performance. The ritual of Rome made no impression on me—(music with one's eyes shut is a very different thing and soul-inspiring, when good)—and so to lose it was no trial—my prayers I always preferred saying in Latin, so no change there—and as regards the great central act of Roman worship, the Mass, my notions were peculiar, but they were such that the see-saw from Anglicanism to Rome and

from Rome to Anglicanism in noways affected that belief. I knew that Christ had said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst." There, according to Protestant and Catholic notions, Christ is in a Church in an especial manner, and whether He was in the consecrated wafer or more vaguely diffused throughout the building was to me a matter of no interest. I knew He was present to His worshippers in a Church—the where did not interest me. Rome said, "In the wafer,"—I said "very well. He is everywhere—He *is* there."

The Sacrificial aspect of Mass was to me in a sense always my belief, because I knew that the "finished work of Christ," as Protestants say, was not compatible with the Scripture record, "He ever liveth to make intercession for us."

If He, in Heaven pleads still, why should not His ministers, plead or offer up the sacrifice, even as He in Heaven offers it to the Eternal Father?

As regards Absolution, I held that the priest simply stated an already accomplished act. I confessed my sins with repentance, and therewith God absolved me. The priest's words were

merely the formal sign that the forgiveness was done and was a ceremony, perhaps useful, not harmful, but certainly not essential.

As Archbishop Manning was very kind to me when as a Roman Catholic I sought the priesthood, so do I owe a deep debt of gratitude to the memory of Bishop Wilberforce, who on my wishing to take Anglican orders, brushed away a few existing difficulties and obtained for me a berth in his diocese. It struck me that he looked at matters with a broad and generous eye, and that he thought my absolute detestation of Infallibility was quite enough to make me a good Anglican, especially as my other views were hardly Roman. Besides he had read a pamphlet I had written, entitled "Why I left the Church of Rome." From that pamphlet I make an extract, which will show better than anything else the justice of my giving up Catholicism, seeing the opinions I held.

"Keble has remarked, 'Nothing could justify one's quitting one's communion except a strong, deliberate, unwilling conviction found in one's heart and conscience, as well as intellect, that it has fallen from being a Church.'

“I do not think a member of the Anglican Church is justified in becoming a Roman Catholic unless he does think her thus fallen. If we had been born Roman Catholics we might indeed thank God that he had placed us in a Church which, in matters of discipline and organization, is far ahead of any other religious community ; but Englishmen are not guilty of schism or heresy who remain in a Church which has ever claimed to be part of the Catholic Church, and which was separated from the Western Patriarchate through the worldly and ambitious spirit of the Popes, who out of a Primacy have erected a Supremacy, thoroughly alien to the teaching of the Church, and which tends to centralize all action in Rome.”

As an Anglican clergyman I had not much satisfaction myself, nor did those to whom I ministered comprehend my line of thought. For example, to dwell on the human side of our Lord, to speak of the Blessed Virgin as if she had really existed was by some supposed to be a sign that I was an Unitarian, by others a Jesuit in disguise.

Again ; ignorant though I was of the science

of theology, still I certainly was a genius compared with the gross ignorance and stupidity I frequently came across. Oh! the horrors, after the *slight* training I had had at St. Edmund's, to listen to Anglican milk-and-water trash—it was very sickening. The only persons who understood me were Broad Churchmen, and they were few and far between. Some of my sermons were objected to; the good old Bishop asked me to send some of them to him. I did so. He marked many of them as being read, and found no fault with them save inexactness sometimes of expression—which was perhaps not to be wondered at. I came away respecting him more than ever for not bullying a poor curate. It was well for me that I was not “taken up” by some broad thinker and yet Christian man—I might still have been a clergyman of the Church of England—it was well that I saw the worst side of things, it made me think more of the old Church which had gone astray with Infallibility! Alas! Mr. Ffoulkes had left; the Dominican priest, Father Suffield, the compiler of the world-wide “Crown of Jesus,” had also gone—so had Döllinger, hitherto acknowledged by Catholics to

be a profound historian, and a light of the Church. Such facts were not of a settling nature. I now gave up all parochial work in the Church of England, and remained in a happy state of uncertainty.

I probably went more into matters than I ever had done before—the admiration for the civilizing and religious work of old Rome, if anything, increased; the piety of the Saints, the huge contrast between the quiet unobtrusive goodness of the Roman priest compared with the Pharisaic, attitudinizing, and often only skin-deep piety of the Anglican parson, was daily brought to my mind. I at length mastered theology as far as a layman's requirements went, and I found that it was Papal Infallibility, and that only, which kept me back. My *will* was to return to the faith I had in such an unprepared manner embraced before, my *understanding* (as I thought) cried No!

A man cannot force himself to do a thing *against* his understanding; but if he can make his understanding *neutral* he may follow his *will*. I “swallowed” Infallibility and became reconciled to Rome.

I was shortly after this instrumental in causing my wife and three other relatives to follow my lead, and thus a final nail was driven in the coffin of Anglicanism as far as I was concerned. I had nailed my flag to the mast.

Some persons may say, "You still had no right to re-enlist under the Roman flag." Such men, I may perhaps be permitted to say, are probably not aware that if a Catholic goes (for example) to confession, and in the course of it says, "Father, I have no wish to disbelieve, I hate doubts, but nevertheless such and such difficulties present themselves frequently,"—the confessor will not say, "You are no longer a Catholic," he will say, "My son, if you wilfully *encourage* doubts it is sin, but the mere fact of doubts presenting themselves to your mind is a trial, but not a sin."

Of course any man would rather be without doubt not only in religion, but in political, medical, or legal questions. Many men infinitely more learned and widely read than myself have, I know, been constantly worried with doubts; still perhaps some will when thinking of such persons say with Browning,

“No, when the fight begins within himself,
 A man's worth something. God stoops o'er his head,
 Satan looks up between his feet—both tug,—
 He's left, himself, i' the middle : the soul wakes
 And grows.”

And yet again; is the man to whom doubts
 come, naturally *ipso facto* a man of less ability or
 a man to be avoided as if plague-struck? I
 read with some little satisfaction what the same
 poet puts into the mouth of his ideal, Bishop
 Blougram,

“Whereas, step off the line on either side—
 You, for example, clever to a fault,
 The rough and ready man who write apace,
 Read somewhat seldomer, think perhaps even less—
 You disbelieve! Who wonders and who cares?
 Lord So-and-so—his coat bedropped with wax,
 All Peter's chains about his waist, his back
 Brave with the needlework of Noodledom—
 Believes! Again, who wonders and who cares?”

Let but a man throw off Catholicism and
 become probably an infidel, then for a few weeks
 perchance it will be said, “What, Father
 So-and-so, of Brompton, threw up his faith, how
 sad!” Six months after the fact is forgotten,
 the man is virtually pardoned. Again, “What,
 Father So-and so broken his vows and married!”
 He too is forgotten.

Yet again : “the priest at So-and-so, throws up all work, goes out to dine dressed as a layman, &c., &c. ? Sad, very sad.”

But if a man wishing to maintain the faith, yet honestly acknowledges doubts—sometimes so strongly that he cannot help expressing them—still tries to cling to the old bark of Peter—for that man there is no forgiveness, no “how sad.”—He is not *forgotten*—he is branded as a *half-Catholic*, as everything that is atrocious. He has not broken vows or denied Christ, he has done worse ; he has tried to crush doubt and to take his part as a Catholic even through difficulties—he is doubly damned.

When the Great Master on the night of His death on Calvary was deserted by His friends, who “all forsook Him and fled,” He did not visit even such cowardice with reproaches. His first word to the assembled disciples when He rose again was, “Peace.”

When Thomas doubted yet would fain believe, he met with no rebuff. But to return to the subject of this narrative. [It is impossible to avoid some mention of the works which mainly influenced the writer in recent years].

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The author in whose writings the main lines of thought were obtained was Dr. Newman. It was his writings which made me join the Church, and his which till recently have been the chief cause of my perplexities.

In saying this I do not mean that such inferences as I drew were "necessary," I will not even say "logical" inferences: I but state a fact, and one which of course is purely personal to me and not to his general readers.

It is very curious the immense reverence and respect with which the name of "Newman" is greeted by High Church Anglicans. It arises partly from the fact that it is thought the condemnation of his views when at Oxford was not legitimate, and was a bullying proceeding. Then ever since he became a Catholic till he was quite recently made a Cardinal, men have thought and said that he was not* put forward by the chief men in his Church; it was said he was too fond

* In his "Idea of a University," p. 238 [Pickering, 1873], he stated, "Neither by my habits of life, nor by vigour of age, am I fitted for the task of authority, or of rule, or of initiation." If he felt he was not fitted for a post of authority why should Anglicans insist that he ought to be given one? Surely a man is himself the best judge of what suits him?

of the old Anglican Church ever to join the Ultramontanes in their vehement denunciation of the sham of High Anglicanism. In fact he was looked on as a half-martyr who had taken a leap in the dark, and had ever since cast wistful eyes at the old home he had left. The Anglican cleric would sigh and shake his head when the illustrious Oratorian's name was mentioned and exclaim, "Poor Newman." Yet what gross nonsense was this attitude which it pleased High Churchmen to assume towards the man who more than any other living personage has given a vital stab to Anglicanism. A most severe but well-merited snub has recently been bestowed on such persons by an Oratorian, Father Ryder, who in the *Contemporary Review* for February, 1879, gave the following severe castigation to Dr. Littledale, who had vehemently attacked converts to Rome. Father Ryder thus punishes these would-be mourners over the "sad" life of Doctor, now Cardinal Newman, (p. 487). "Dr. Littledale's ill-treatment of converts would have lacked something in the perfection of its unpleasantness, if he had omitted an awkward compliment to Father Newman, as one who, it

appears, has not fallen, and so, whilst unappreciated by his co-religionists, is fortunate enough still to retain Dr. Littledale's esteem. No doubt Father Newman has the 'reverence and love' of many Anglicans even outside the sphere of his own personal friends, and this is to some extent based upon a true instinct on their part that even his severest blows are *vulnera diligentis*. Amongst Ritualists, however, of Dr. Littledale's school, a fashion has for some time prevailed—which only a perverted sense of courtesy could construe into an expression either of reverence or love—that whenever they throw a stone at a window of the Catholic Church, they hint to Father Newman with a bow and a grimace that they know he rather likes it than otherwise. And even when he has sallied out upon them and dealt them his weightiest blows, the very Ritualist transfixed on his spear will writhe round in an expiring effort, not to strike, but to exclaim, 'Ah, never mind! your heart is with us, after all.' It is touching, and yet it is absurd."

Cardinal Newman has in his writings denied Anglican orders, and has laughed at the pretensions of the High Church party enough to cause

a blush of shame on the face of those who still talk of "Poor Father Newman, who so loves our Anglican Church."

I perfectly followed the Cardinal in his detestation of shams, and the recent Ritualistic development was never one which I sympathized with or thought in the least logical.

Again, the tone of supreme contempt with which ignorant Ritualists sneer at Rome, and yet adopt all our devotions, our uniform and phraseology, is disgusting in every sense of the word. I agreed with the denunciation which Montalembert heaped on such illogical apes when he wrote, "I confess I cannot refrain from making a most essential difference among the Puseyites and Anglo-Catholics—between those who are humble, simple, and feel the weakness of their position, and those proud, ignorant, and obstinate fools who think themselves the true representatives of Catholicism in the world, like the people who write in the *English Churchman*, who pretend, like Neale himself, and so many others, to understand every beauty, and practise every virtue of Catholicity, while maintaining their schismatical disobedience against Rome and their outrageous

contempt of the Romanists in England. These men, I am convinced, will always prove the worst enemies of the Church, more so than infidels themselves." ("Memoir of Count De Montalembert," by Mrs. Oliphant, Vol. II., p. 34. Blackwood and Sons. 1872.)

I am not conscious while I was an Anglican clergyman of having ever said a single word against Rome, and curiously enough some persons since then become Catholics have said my remarks helped them on their way from the city of Chaos to that of Order.

Persons are so differently constituted, some men feel things like a sensitive aneroid, others are unaffected though a tempest be roaring around them. An article in the *Saturday Review*, if ably written, would make one man ponder over it for a day or two; another might feel the difficulties it suggested, but pass them over. So passages in the books of celebrated men will confuse some persons while others pay no heed to them.

The fact of having rejoined the Church of Rome did not solve one's doubts—it only made it more necessary to try and not give way to

them; but it is known to all men that the Vatican Council did not in England close the controversy on Papal Infallibility. Cardinal Manning, Monsignor Capel, and others, constantly preached on the subject—the press unceasingly animadverted on it, and in fact the air was still full of controversy. The Catholics whom one looked up to did not seem to agree in their opinions on what one would imagine to be matters of vital consequence. For example, the “Syllabus” has been the ostensible, though perhaps not real, cause of a great deal of anti-Catholic feeling in France and elsewhere; I was puzzled what to think of the following opposite opinions by celebrated Churchmen:—

CARDINAL MANNING.

The Encyclical *Quanta Cura* and the syllabus or compendium of eighty condemnations in previous encyclicals and allocutions—all these had been at once received by them as a part of the supreme teaching of the Church through the person of its head, which, by the special assistance of the Holy Ghost, is preserved from all error. They did not add

DOCTOR NEWMAN.

“It has no mark or seal put upon it which gives it a direct relation to the Pope . . . The Syllabus is not an official act. . . . If, indeed, the Pope should ever make that anonymous compilation directly his own, then of course I should bow to it, and accept it as strictly his . . . the Syllabus then has no dogmatic force.”

Letter to Duke of Norfolk.

certainly to that which was already infallible.”—(P. 34, *Petri Privilegium*. 1871.)

Of course there was no difficulty, but still I did not see how to make these statements agree, and I confess such apparently conflicting statements unsettled me.*

Not only did Dr. Newman’s writings puzzle me in this matter, but on another point I was—of course unnecessarily—upset by not understanding the subtleties of theological discussions.

When defending the Vatican Decrees against

* “Then, again, it must be recollected, in connection with what I have said, that theology is a science, and a science of a special kind; its reasoning, its method, its modes of expression, and its language are all its own.”—(*Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*, p. 92). If the “*Syllabus*” can only properly be interpreted by a theologian, as really seems to be the case, it surely was a pity that it should through the Press come before the general public, even if a Catholic public, without the explanation which theologians alone can give? The most absurd interpretations have been given in the French and German and English press.

The *Dublin Review* (April, 1875), speaking of Dr. Newman’s and also Mgr. Fessler’s denial of the *ex-cathedra* character of the *Syllabus*, says, “Father Newman in his recent ‘Letter to the Duke of Norfolk,’ holds with Mgr. Fessler (but much more confidently) that the issue of that *Syllabus* was no *ex-cathedra* act. . . . With very great respect for the two eminent writers in question, we must nevertheless frankly say that their arguments have failed to convince us.” (P. 340.)

Mr. Gladstone's attack, Dr. Newman pointed out that in most cases the question of Papal Infallibility would not conflict with English politics. He wrote as will be seen on the left-hand side of the page to the Duke of Norfolk, but to the Catholics of Birmingham he a few years before spoke as will be seen on the right-hand column. This and other difficulties I mentioned in an article I wrote in *Macmillan's Magazine* for March, 1875.

DR. NEWMAN TO THE DUKE
OF NORFOLK.

"And again, his infallibility in consequence is not called into exercise, unless he speaks to the whole world ; for, if his precepts, in order to be dogmatic, must enjoin what is necessary to salvation, they must be necessary for all men. Accordingly, orders which issue from him for the observance of particular countries, or political or religious classes, have no claim to be the utterances of his infallibility. If he enjoins upon the hierarchy of Ireland to withstand mixed education, this is no exercise

DR. NEWMAN TO THE
CATHOLICS OF BIRMINGHAM.

"in his administration of Christ's Kingdom, in his religious acts, we must never oppose his will, or dispute his word, or criticise his policy, or shrink from his side ? There are kings of the earth who have despotic authority, which their subjects obey indeed but disown in their hearts ; but we must never murmur at that absolute rule which the Sovereign Pontiff has over us, because it is given to him by Christ, and in obeying him we are obeying his Lord Even in secular matters it is

of his infallibility."—*Letter to Duke of Norfolk*, p. 120.

And again, speaking of Mr. Gladstone, he says (p. 63), "Then in the next page he insinuates that, under his infallibility, come acts of excommunication, as if the Pope could not make mistakes in this field of action. . . . What have excommunication and interdict to do with infallibility? Was St. Victor infallible when he separated from his Communion the Asiatic Churches? or Liberius when in like manner he excommunicated Athanasius? And, to come to later times, was Gregory XIII when he had a medal struck in honour of the St. Bartholomew massacre? or Paul IV in his conduct towards Elizabeth? or Sextus V when he blessed the Armada? or Urban VIII when he persecuted Galileo? No Catholic ever pretends that these Popes were infallible in these acts."

ever safe to be on his side, dangerous to be on the side of his enemies."—(*Sermons on Various Occasions*, 3rd Edit. Burns & Oates, 1870, p. 268.)

It is most unfortunate when a convert who has had many doubts and difficulties comes at last in a docile spirit of belief into the True Church to

find that he is still at sea as to whether or no certain very important documents are to be looked on as infallible or not. Such was my opinion. I felt that a heavy burden was placed on many men by these seeming contradictions. One's Protestant and Infidel friends jeered at the apparent disunion on vital questions, and there was no decided rejoinder from Rome (as far as I know) that such-and-such was the right faith on these apparently controverted points.

I now, as shortly will be stated, see the matter clearly ; then I did not do so ; no more did many Catholics whom I came across. The only difference between them and myself was that I occasionally in the Press vented my anxious difficulties, whereas my friends had the same difficulties—and *kept quiet*. Their policy was wise for their own sakes ; for some were ungenerous or unthoughtful enough to misinterpret my anxiety, and imagine it was a carping spirit against Rome.

But the great difficulty at the time was how to reconcile Dr. Newman's statement in his reply to Mr. Gladstone with his Birmingham utterance.

A Pope, said Dr. Newman, was not infallible

except when he spoke *to the whole world*; also if he gives an order to the Bishops of Ireland to withstand mixed education, this is not an infallible utterance;—excommunications, interdicts, or persecutions are not infallible. Then if Popes were not infallible in excommunication—for example, Elizabeth's, or in the blessing of the Armada, or the having a medal struck in honour of the massacre of St. Bartholomew—if these actions were not infallible, why did Dr. Newman tell the Birmingham Catholics that “in secular matters it is ever safe to be on his side, dangerous to be on the side of his enemies?” And again, we must never “oppose his will,” or “dispute his word,” or “criticise his policy, or shrink from his side,” in his administration of Christ's kingdom?

I thought, and I said so at the time, that an English Catholic in the time of Queen Elizabeth would have been very awkwardly placed if he had to accept without criticism or flinching from the side of the Pope—the blessing of the Spanish Armada!

It will be at once noticed that as the Popes have built up European States and been the pioneers everywhere of civilization, men would be

loth to say aught against them; for even Protestants, if a spark of generosity linger in their breasts, will not turn and assail their mother because she is, *in their estimation*, old and rather eccentric and absurd. Yet when such men are told that not only must they reverence this mother of Europe, but that they are bound to admire and approve of all and each of her actions, such an order may very possibly render many persons less reverential, more inclined to find fault, less apt to reverence grey hairs.

If such be the case with fair-minded Protestants, what can be said of Catholics who, either through being thrown amid a Protestant population, with Protestant surroundings and influences, or in the case of converts with whom still unavoidably linger remnants of the "Old Adam" of Protestantism—what will such men feel, if they think they are told by one so holy, so revered as Dr. now Cardinal Newman, that no actions of the Popes are to be criticized without danger—without a loss of safety? Such were my thoughts and my difficulties.

As a chain or rope on which hangs the life of a man protected only by holding on to it from the

abyss below him, is only so strong as its weakest link or coil, so the Convert to Rome, if he, through difficulties, becomes a receptacle for doubt, will be weak as a Catholic if he is not sound on Papal authority, even if apart from that he held every article of the Catholic Faith. If the Papal link is weak, the whole chain will be but a dangerous and inefficient connecting-link with firm ground.

The question of Papal *rule* as a natural result would throw a mind back again on the Vatican Council and the exponents of the teaching of that Council.

Here again, puzzled by the blind submission to Papal rule on all secular questions in which Popes had ever intervened or used their influence, which seemed inculcated, one turned to see what was the general opinion on the question of Papal rule and infallibility.

It did not appear that there was perfect agreement, but on the contrary hot controversy. The *Dublin Review*, then under the Editorship of a convert to Rome (now no longer so), nearly every quarter accused Dr. Newman or someone of not being correct in their statements on Papal ques-

tions; or else would assert, for example, that a Bishop held as *ex cathedrâ* the Syllabus, while one found that same Bishop repudiating their assertion in the very next number of 'the *Review*.*

While trying to foster on a Bishop a statement which he repudiates, the same review in the next number contained strictures on Dr. Newman's defence of the Vatican Council against Mr. Gladstone, and writes, "F. Newman is very sensitive to the danger of 'scandalizing Christ's little ones.' It seems to us, that in many cases there is no more certain way of scandalizing Christ's little ones than the minimizing Catholic doctrine."—*Dublin Review*, Oct. 1875.

Thus the most important, Seminary-read, non-indexed† *Dublin Review* was permitted without

* The *Dublin* said, "The Bishop is very express on the authority of the Syllabus;" and again, "For ourselves we have always held what the Bishop of Birmingham expresses; that it is certainly an *ex-cathedrâ* pronouncement."

The *Dublin* humbly apologises as follows for thus making unauthorized statements:—

"We regret profoundly that we so seriously misunderstood the Bishop on the two matters to which he refers."

(*Dublin Review*, April, 1875.)

† Be it remembered the *Dublin Review* was professedly

let or hindrance to weaken Mr. Newman's influence by adverse criticism, and generally to act as an assumed or permitted instructor of its readers without any condemnation. The result of such differences exhibited frequently may lead to one of two courses—(1) Either blank indifference to Catholicism, (2) or the acceptance of a line of thought which cuts away all objections which such controversy on vital questions might raise. After many months of utter perplexity at seeing “physicians” disagree, I found most fortunately that there was a point of view from which one might watch undisturbed the acrimonious attacks and insinuations which had hitherto proved so unsettling. The writer does not pretend that all men would agree in regarding it as a *solvent* of all difficulties; but to him it was so, and that is quite sufficient, for what satisfies one mind will naturally be of use to many more, especially as the author of the ideas now to be mentioned was instrumental in bringing back to the faith thousands of semi-infidel Frenchmen.

Roman Catholic, and dealt with *theological* questions quarter after quarter.

Count Joseph De Maistre, of a noble French family, was born in Chambéry in 1753. His people had settled in Savoy, and he was in 1803 sent as Ambassador to St. Petersburg. Born at such a period, and being a staunch Catholic, he naturally saw the rising of the great wave of revolution and infidelity in France. He beheld with regret those of the old nobility who should have supported the Church and the Crown sapped by the insidious infidelity of Voltaire, and thus by their attitude pave the way first for the fall of the Church and State, and then finally and most justly witnessed their own extinction in the flame which they had helped to kindle.

One of the most remarkable works published by De Maistre was "Le Pape," a book which especially caught the attention of the philosophic-minded Frenchman, because it asserted that the principles of Papal rule and infallibility could be proved to be just and reasonable apart from a single word of theology proper. To quote his own words (on Infallibility):—"But I am not aware that it has been sufficiently remarked, with regard to this great question, as well as so many others, that theological truths are no other than

general truths manifested and divinized within the sphere of religion, in such manner that it is impossible to attack one without attacking a law of the world. Infallibility in the spiritual order of things, and *sovereignty* in the temporal order, are two words perfectly synonymous. The one and the other denote that high power which rules over all other powers—from which all derive their authority—which governs, and is not governed—which judges, and is not judged. When we say that the Church is infallible, we do not ask for her, it is quite essential to be observed, any particular privilege; we only require that she possess the right common to all possible sovereignties, which all necessarily act as if infallible. For every government is absolute; and from the moment it can be resisted, under pretext of error or injustice, it no longer exists.”

A reader not accustomed to think carefully what words mean, might confuse what De Maistre calls “Sovereignty” with “Royalty.” Of course the mere mention of the difference is sufficient to put him on his guard against such a mistake. Sovereignty is *everywhere* supreme, whereas Royalty is generally limited. In England, Sove-

reignty is vested in King, Lords, and Commons : what they jointly decree is an act of sovereignty and irreversible.

Thus De Maistre's argument is not by any means limited to the case of absolute monarchies, but will tell equally well in the American or other Republics. He observes, "What is a republic, when it has exceeded certain dimensions? It is a country, more or less extensive, commanded by a certain number of men who call themselves *the republic*. But the government is always ONE; for there is not—nay, there cannot be, a dispersed republic. Thus, in the time of the Roman republic the republican sovereignty was in the *Forum*; and the subject countries—that is to say, about two-thirds of the known world—were a monarchy, of which the *Forum* was the absolute and merciless sovereign. Remove this state of rule, and there remains no longer any tie or common government, and all unity disappears."

Once let this idea of applying to the Catholic Church the same idea of sovereignty as is acknowledged in every state, what a host of confused statements vanish into thin air!

Why should a Catholic layman always want to know as to which particular department such and such a Papal statement is to be attributed? He knows this much—that the occupant of the chair of Peter is absolute monarch of the Catholic Church, and as such has a claim on the willing (not grudging) obedience of his subjects. The difficulty which an English Catholic felt when in the time of Elizabeth the Pope blessed the Armada,* is no longer a difficulty; any more than a very palpable abuse of kingly power is an argument in favour of Communism. But because in the long line of Sovereign Pontiffs there have been occasions, few and far between, when a subject felt he could not obey a Papal order, that is no argument against Papal *sovereignty*. The whole difficulty vanishes, as I say, into thin air.

Rome is not apt to bully kings who act justly or individuals who live rightly. Take those persons who have felt Papal anger: did they

* Protestants may remember that Elizabeth acted in a very similar manner by aiding the rebellion of the French Protestants against lawfully constituted authority; and also that the Tudors owe to the Pope their reign as Kings of England; for Henry VII, be it remembered, thought it necessary to receive a Papal bull *confirming* his title and condemning all opponents as rebels.

deserve it or not ? Was King John immaculate ? Was the adulterous Henry VIII irreproachable ? Was Elizabeth, the murderer of her guest, a character of spotless virtue ?

The Popes have generally condemned monarchs or persons whose condemnation the general voice of mankind had already held up as censurable.

As an article in the April number (1879) of the *Dublin Review*, now under Episcopal control and management, observes :—"The spirit that pervades moral theology and characterizes the personal action of the Holy See itself, is not one that takes delight in making things difficult in the practice of the Christian life, but making them easy. The spirit that animates the Holy See, in its practical dealing with its subjects, is pre-eminently one of gentleness, considerateness, tolerance, and moderation. It insists, indeed, on a full recognition of, and submission to, the right principle, but is ready to make every reasonable concession and allowance in practice."—(p. 446.)

The article from which the above extract is taken, is attributed to a learned and beloved Benedictine priest—not an experimentalist in theology, but a qualified proficient.

While thus deeply indebted to the line of thought in which De Maistre is, *facile princeps*, master, I once again, as when I first joined the Church, felt that Dr. Newman gave one an additional cue to the right mode of looking at questions of Papal rule. In his preface to "The Via Media,"* which he has recently re-published, the Cardinal makes some remarks which fully coincide with and bear out many of the lines of thought given by De Maistre, and thus a Prince of the Church authorizes one in assuming that De Maistre is a true exponent of Catholicism.¹ Cardinal Newman argues that Christ had a threefold office as Mediator,—He is Prophet, Priest, and King. After this pattern, in human measure, the Church also has a triple office, and the Pope as Vicar of Christ inherits these offices, and acts for the Church in them. Christianity is then a philosophy, a political power, and a religious rite. It has as a religion, its pastor and flock; as a philosophy, the schools; as a rule, the Papacy and its Curia. Cardinal Newman then shows how these functions have developed; he also adds, "Truth is the guiding principle of

* "The Via Media," Vol. I. 1877.

theology and theological inquiries ; devotion and edification, of worship ; and expedience, of government." He points out that the Church has to act in all these capacities, and naturally he observes : " In consequence, however well she may perform her duties on the whole, it will always be easy for her enemies to make a case against her, well founded or not, from the action or interaction, or the chronic collisions or contrasts, or the temporary suspense or delay, of her administration, in her three several departments of duty—her government, her devotions, and her schools,—from the conduct of her rulers, her pastors, her divines, or her people."

I cannot do better, in concluding this subject, than quote part of the last section of this wonderful treatise on the threefold office and work of the Church, for such this Preface virtually seems to be. " Whatever is great refuses to be reduced to human rule, and to be made consistent in its many aspects with itself. . . . We need not feel surprise then, if Holy Church too, the supernatural creation of God, is an instance of the same law, presenting to us an admirable consistency in word and deed, as her general characteristic, but

crossed and discredited now and then by apparent anomalies which need, and which claim, at our hands an exercise of faith."

Such statements as those of Cardinal Newman completely clear the ground of all captious or honest queries as to Papal Rule, from historic difficulties. The Papacy has, to speak plainly and apart from the question of the supernatural, had a most difficult game to play in Europe. Existing in every country, having subjects under monarchs at variance with each other, it would be most extraordinary if her administration had not sometimes given offence. Such questions as the moral support of the Spanish cause against England, when all the surroundings are considered, has much to prevent in that instance even a Protestant from judging harshly of the Papacy; and if a Pope acted in one case against the interest of such an anti-Catholic woman as Elizabeth, what does not England owe to Rome in other matters? What does not Europe owe to her? Who was there frequently to make the kingly tyrants of Europe tremble but the Popes? Who alone braved the biggest bully who ever existed, Napoleon I, but a poor old man called

Pius VII? Compare the long line of Sovereign Pontiffs with any race of kings and the result will show whether or no the rule of the Sovereign Pontiffs is not a brilliant contrast to that of the purely secular rule of kings.

If, then, it is possible to defend the Papacy with a De Maistre from a purely worldly point of view, what additional strength does she not wield when one remembers that she is the Kingdom of God on Earth—when one bears in mind her supernatural action as the chosen and infallible Judge of Truth on Earth?

Protestantism in all its forms, whether Episcopal or not, is but a miserable abortion—and its first promoters were monks who broke their vows, kings who committed adultery, and a race of church-land-bought courtiers and prelates. As with its birth, so with its progress—thriving only when it had the power to persecute, fading wherever Catholicism had free admission—the tool of monarchs and the laughing-stock of infidels, it denied the supremacy of the Pope to succumb to the supremacy of kings—it taught rebellion against Papal authority, and now it is only a question of a generation ere it fall into the

pit never to rise again. Catholicism, on the contrary, the more it is persecuted the more it has thriven ; day by day the decline of all other Creeds shows the Catholic Church shining like a sun in the heavens—day by day converts, sick of the negation called Protestantism, rush into her open arms, wondering with blank astonishment how it was possible their eyes should ever have been blinded to the evidently Divine character of the Holy Roman Church.

Faith of our fathers—Mary's prayers
 Shall win our country back to thee,
 And through the truth that comes from God,
 O then, indeed, shall we be free !





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